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ABSTRACT

The following premises formed the basis for this research: (1) a child's social and intellectual development are closely related; (2) the classroom teacher has a tremendous influence on the social as well as the academic growth of children; and (3) the school counselor may facilitate children's academic and social growth through consultations with teachers. Research questions were formulated asking whether sociometric statuses, grade point averages, FIRO-BC scale scores of students identified as isolates would improve after teacher-facilitated interactions resulting from teacher-counselor consultations were implemented. Subjects were 17 children in Grades 4 through 6 who were identified as isolates on a sociometric instrument administered by their classroom teachers. The counselor consulted with the teachers of these students once a month, or six times during the academic year. Consultation focused on involving the child in the educational experiences. Results showed an increase during the school year in the sociometric status of all 17 children. There was also a significant increase in grade point averages, and significant differences on five of the six scales of the FIRO-BC for these children. These findings lend support to the notion that a child's social and academic development are closely related, and that the classroom teacher does have an influence on both. (Author)

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The Effects of Teacher - Counselor Consultation on Sociometric Status and Achievement of Elementary School Student

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> Learning eventually involves interaction between the learner and the environment, and its effectiveness relates to the frequency, variety, and intensity of the interaction.
>
> George Leonard, 1968, p.14

Counselors are realizing that counselor-teacher consultation is one key to the implementation of a humane school environment, an environment in which learning can flourish. In developing a fully-functioning guidance program in the school, the counselor works closely with the teaching faculty in attempting to meet the diverse personal, social and intellectual needs of the student population.

Creative counselors are finding that sociometric techniques are an excellent basis for developing cooperative consulting relationships with teachers. Through the use of sociometric techniques, classroom relationships can be defined and used as a basis for facilitating an accepting social and emotional environment.

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Sociometry, itself, does not solve nor alleviate concerns. However, Keat (1974) suggests that sociometric results present graphic patterns of the existing relationships of children so that an organized plan of various activities may be implemented in an attempt to meet personal-social needs. Dinkmeyer and Caldwell (1970) state that teachers are in unique and strategic

positions to restructure not only the social but the intellectual needs for children as well.

Barclay (1966 a, b, c) states that sociometric measurement is an effective means of establishing goals, porcesses and results of counseling and guidance activities. He stresses the role of the counselor in assisting teachers in implementing classroom intervention strategies for students needing assistance in social development. Blain and Ramirez (1968) found that children of low sociometric standing could have their sociometric rank affected through organized interaction with other children in the classroom.

Purpose

This study is based on the premise that a child's social and intellectual development are closely related. The following questions were formulated:

1. Will there be an increase in the sociometric status of elementary students identified as isolates after the implementation of teacher-facilitated interactions resulting from teacher-counselor consultation?
2. Will there be an increase in the achievement level, as measured by grade point averages, of low sociometric status students after the implementation of teacher-facilitated interactions resulting from teacher-ccunselor consultation?
3. Will there be a difference in the scores on the six FIRO-BC scales of students identified as isolates after the implementation of teacher-facilitated interactions resulting from teacher-ccunselor consultation?

Methodology

The procedure for this study was based on the assumptions that 1) the classroom teacher has a tremendous influence on the social as well as academic

growth of children, and 2) the counselor may facilitate children's academic and social growth through consultations with classroom teachers concerning children's special needs.

Elementary school teachers in selected central Oklahoma school districts were asked to volunteer to take part in this study. From these volunteers, 15 teachers were randomly selected. The teachers were instructed to:

1. administer a sociometric questionnaire to students in his/her classroom in September, 1975;
2. identify isolates, if any, from the sociometric data;
3. administer the FIRO-BC to the child or children identified as isolates;
4. consult with the principal investigator about the child or children identified as isolates once a month or six times during the school year;
5. record grade point averages of the identified isolates from May, 1975 and May, 1976;
6. administer a second sociometric device and a second FIRO-BC in April, 1976.

Subjects

The subjects for this study were 17 children of a total of 342 children in grades 4 through 6 who were identified as isolates on a sociometric instrument administered by their classroom teachers. The subjects attended 15 schools with a self-contained classroom organization. The teachers wrote the names of all the children in the class on the board in an attempt to make certain that children absent the day the instrument was administered were not overlooked.

Instrumentation

The Sociometric instrument utilized to identify the isolates was:

1. Name three children in our room with whom you would like to work on a class project.
2. Name three children in our room with whom you like to play at recess.
3. Name three children in our room you would like to invite to your birthday party.

The FIRO-BC (Schutz, 1967) is a 54 item questionaire scaled on fourth, fifth, and sixth grade children which measures three dimensions of interpersonal relationship: Inclusion (I), one's general social orientation; Control (C), one's leadership behavior; and Affection (A), one's needs for deep relationships with others. For each scale, two scores, symbolized by the letters "e" and "w" are obtained. The "e" score represents th child's expressed or manifest behavior; overt, observable behavior within each of the three dimensions. The "w" scores represents a child's wanted behavior; what the child wants from others in the three areas.

The Consultation Process

The focus of the consultation process between the teachers and the principle investigator was, of course, unique for each child. However, since the children were all identified as isolates there were some commonalities. First, the teachers were encouraged to use small task groups for a variety of projects and to organize small groups for instructional purposes. Cross age or peer leadership for the small groups was initiated in each of the 15 classrooms. Second, the teachers were encouraged to provide varied opportunities for the children identified as isolates to feel needed at school. Special tasks such as watering plants and grading papers were suggested as means of

involving the children identified as isolates.

A third common consultation suggestion was positive contact between the teacher and the parents. Of the 15 teachers involved, 11 made a home visit, 13 talked with the parent at least once on the phone and all 15 sent home positive notes concerning the child's academic achievement and attitudes toward school. A fourth common result of the teacher-counselor consultation was the initiation of teacher-facilitated group guidance activities once a week in each classroom. Published materials available for group guidance varied with the schools, but the focus of the groups' activities were 1) knowing yourself, and 2) getting along with others.

Results

There was an increase in the sociometric status of all 17 children who were identified as isolates on the first sociometric instrument administered in the fall. In the spring administration of the sociometric instrument each of the children were chosen by at least one other child and these were reciprocal choices. More specifically, 9 of the 17 children were chosen by one other child and reciprocated the choice. Three children were chosen by two peers and reciprocated both choices. Two children were chosen by three peers and made reciprocal choices on two of the three. One child was chosen by four peers and made reciprocal choices on three.

The t-test for a difference between two dependent means (Brunig & Kintz, 1968) was used to test the remaining two research questions. There was a significant (.001 level) increase in achievement as measured by grade point averages from May 1975 to May 1976, of the children identified as isolates on the first sociometric instrument (Table 1).

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Insert Table 1 about here

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There were significant differences on five of the six scales of the FIRO-BC (Table 2).

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Insert Table 2 about here

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The expressed Control scale of this instrument was not significantly different from the first administration in September, 1975 to the second administration in April, 1976. The expressed and wanted Inclusion and Affection scores and the wanted Control score were all significantly increased.

Conclusions

Within the limitations of this study, it appears that teacher-counselor consultations and the resultant teacher-facilitated activities increased the sociometric status of children identified as isolates and concomitantly raised their grade point averages. These findings lend further support to the notion that a child's social and academic development are closely related and that the classroom teacher does have an influence on both.

The consultation process possibly acted as a stimulus in increasing the sensitivity of teachers toward the special needs of children identified as isolates. Perhaps through the various activities and interactions that resulted from the consultation process, the teachers gained a deeper understanding of the children. The children also may have felt the special concern shown in them and gained a greater sense of belongingness in the classroom

and the interest to fulfill the teachers' expectations.

The significant increases in the "e" and "w" scores on the Inclusion scale indicates that the children reported that they were more comfortable in social settings and wanted more acceptance and belongingness from others on the second administration of the FIRO-BC then they had on the initial administration of the instrument. Therefore, they reported a change from moving away from people and being extremely selective with whom they associated to moving toward people and indicating more openness to others.

The significant increases in the "e" and "w" scores on the Affection scale indicates that the children reported more ease at initiating close intimate relationships and more desire for such relationships with others.

The low wanted Control score indicates that the children definitely do not want others to control or make decisions for them. However, no significant difference in the expressed Control score from the Fall to the Spring administration of the FIRO-BC suggests that the children in this study did not grow to a great degree in leadership behavior; in wishing to make decisions and in taking on responsibility. Therefore, teachers and counselors should be cautious in planning intervention strategies for children identified as isolates so that they do not encourage too much peer leadership too soon. Allowing the children themselves to decide when and how much leadership they are willing to assume would probably be the best procedure to follow.

The use of both sociometric and FIRO-BC results offers a vast amount of information on the social needs of children. For example, children with low expressed Inclusion scores suggest that they are uncomfortable around people and tend to move away from them. Therefore, in planning for small group instruction or task groups a teacher may initially wish to group children according

to a sociometric preference or preferences, in an attempt to begin developing an ease in interacting with others.

Implications

1. Counselors and teachers may with to use the easily administered and scored FIRO-BC as one of the data sources on which to base organized interventions for children.
2. The types of activities and group interactions that are agreed upon as possible intervention strategies as a result of counselor-teacher consultations are many and varied. The only limiting factors are the committment and creativity of both the teacher and the counselor.
3. Consulting with teachers and the resultant activities engaged in by the classroom teacher on behalf of the child are potent in facilitating children's social and academic growth. Therefore, a teamwork approach in attempting to meet children's needs is mandatory.

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Table 1

Differences in Grade Point Averages of

Identified Isolates

(N = 17)

Mean GPA May, 1975	Mean GPA May, 1976	t
2.20	2.61	4.1*

*p .001

Table 2

FIRO-BC Scale Scores for Children

Identified as Isolates

(N = 17)

Scale	Mean Score Sept., 1975	Mean Score April, 1976	t
I^e	4.76	6.47	5.52*
I^w	4.53	6.47	4.41*
C^e	2.35	2.94	1.51
C^w	1.94	2.88	2.35**
A^c	5.53	6.94	3.61***
A^w	5.18	6.94	3.83**

*p .001

**p .01

***p .05